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Mass-Migration to the Western World in Light of the Hebrew Bible: The Challenge of Complexity

Markus Zehnder

RÉSUMÉ

La présente étude considère deux questions distinctes dans le traitement biblique des migrations. Premièrement, quelles distinctions marquantes rencontre-t-on dans les textes bibliques pour différencier divers types d'« étrangers » ? Deuxièmement, comment se présente dans la Bible hébraïque le réseau complexe de traditions concernant les différences ethniques et religieuses et les divers types de migrations ? L'auteur analyse en détail les concepts de *nokri* et de *ger* se rapportant à différents

types d'étrangers vivant en Israël. Puis il expose certains aspects principaux ayant trait au thème de la migration dans les textes du Nouveau Testament en considérant plus particulièrement comment ils s'articulent avec la Bible hébraïque. Les observations auxquelles le conduit cette étude peuvent contribuer à jeter quelque lumière biblique sur l'analyse et le traitement de la situation actuelle dans les pays occidentaux, alors qu'un grand nombre de personnes tentent d'atteindre leurs rivages pour s'installer dans ces pays.

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die vorliegende Studie befasst sich mit zwei unterschiedlichen Aspekten der biblischen Ansichten zu Migration: 1) Welche hervorstechenden Unterscheidungen werden in der Bibel selbst vorgenommen in Bezug auf unterschiedlicher Arten von „Fremdlingen“? 2) Wie sieht das komplizierte Netz von Traditionen im Hinblick auf ein ethnisches und religiöses „Anders-Sein“ sowie auf verschiedene Arten von Migration in der hebräischen Bibel aus? Die Konzepte von *nokri* und *ger*, also unterschied-

liche Arten von in Israel lebenden Fremdlingen, werden im Detail analysiert. Zuletzt werden einige der wichtigsten Aspekte von Migration in neutestamentlichen Texten aufgezeigt, insbesondere in ihrem Bezug zur hebräischen Bibel. Die Beobachtungen die in diesen drei Abschnitten vorgelegt werden, können dazu beitragen, etwas „biblisches Licht“ auf die Analyse und Debatte der gegenwärtigen Situation in westlichen Ländern zu werfen, wo eine große Anzahl von Menschen versucht, deren Küsten zu erreichen und sich innerhalb deren Grenzen anzusiedeln.

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SUMMARY

The present study deals with two distinct aspects of the biblical views of migration: 1) What are some of the salient distinctions that are made within the biblical material concerning various types of 'foreigners'? 2) What does the complex web of traditions concerning ethnic and religious 'otherness' and various kinds of migration within the Hebrew Bible look like? The concepts of *nokri*

and *ger*, different types of foreigners living in Israel, are analysed in detail. At the end some of the main aspects of migration in New Testament texts, especially as they relate to the Hebrew Bible, will be presented. The observations adduced in these three sections can contribute to shed some kind of 'biblical light' on the analysis and discussion of the current situation in Western countries, where large numbers of people attempt to reach their shores and settle within their borders.

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1. Introduction

Migration is a socio-politically sensitive issue and research on this topic is not unaffected by a variety of agendas.¹ Therefore, special attention must be given to critically questioning *a-priori* assumptions of all kinds and to identifying distortions in the application of scholarly standards in the analysis and use of biblical texts.² Among these *a-priori* assumptions, both conscious and sometimes unconscious, one can identify ideas about the fundamental (non-)desirability or inevitability of mass-migration, or the idea that societal problems in general, and societal problems related to mass-migration in particular, are manageable or solvable if only the efforts and resources invested by government agencies or NGOs are large enough.³ Among possible distortions in the use of biblical texts, the following four need to be mentioned:

- The complexity of the biblical data may be unduly reduced by neglecting the nuanced distinctions that the biblical texts make between different types of migrants and by ignoring aspects of the complex mosaic of texts that are sometimes more positive and sometimes more critical towards various types of migration. There is a danger that only texts are considered which conform to the writer's own views, which in the current situation will often be texts that exhibit a positive assessment of migration/migrants.⁴
- The *theological* dimension of biblical texts pertaining to migration can be neglected by over-emphasising social, economic, psychological or other non-theological aspects. It makes, however, a difference whether a migrant's journey is driven by the search for improved living conditions or by a direct call from God (as, e.g., in the case of Abraham). In the *application* of the biblical material, concomitant reductionist approaches will focus more or less exclusively on material and humanitarian aspects.⁵
- In terms of both the historical interpretation of the biblical material, but even more so of its application to current issues, differences between the historical situation in ancient Israel and the present-day world are sometimes neglected. This leads to sweeping identifications of biblical migrants (for example, the Israelites or the *ger*) with various types of present-day migrants.⁶
- A lack of historical distinction may also appear when ordinances given to ancient Israelite indi-

viduals or the Israelite people as a whole are simply transferred to modern political entities or church bodies, thereby conflating Church and state and/or the levels of personal ethical and collective responsibility.⁷

2. Distinctions between different groups of migrants in the Hebrew Bible

The Hebrew Bible as a whole and noticeably single literary entities within it make a clear distinction between different types of foreigners living in Israel. Most often, differences are made between individuals without reference to their specific ethnic background; in some instances, however, specific ethnic labels are used, mostly – but not exclusively – when reference is made to groups of people as opposed to individuals. How far these two types of differentiation are thought to reflect one coherent system is difficult to assess. This question, however, cannot be investigated further in the present context.

2.1 Distinctions on the individual level

As far as individuals are concerned, a clear distinction is made between *nokri* and *ger*.⁸

The noun *nokri* refers to a type of foreigner who comes to Israel not to seek permanent residency, but to stay temporarily, typically as a person involved in trade. He remains emotionally, culturally and religiously at some distance to the receiving society.⁹ The noun *ger*, on the other hand, likely refers to a person of foreign origin who migrates into Israel because of war, famine, poverty, impending debt slavery or the like. He will typically be a person who has come to stay in Israel and to become part of the Israelite society. He is willing to assimilate at all levels to a higher degree than the *nokri*.¹⁰

Both categories of foreigners are not legal subjects who can stand for themselves in court; and both cannot acquire land within the areas allotted to the Israelite tribes.

2.1.1 The alien of the *ger*-type

The *ger* is mentioned in all legal collections found in the Hebrew Bible, as well as in narrative and prophetic texts (and in fact also in Psalms, Proverbs and so on). For reasons of space, we must confine ourselves to a brief look at the legal collections.

A. The priestly laws

The regulations dealing with the *ger* in the priestly

laws (Leviticus and Numbers, probably also some passages in Exodus) can be classified in terms of topics as follows: cult, morals, civil law, general measures of protection of the weak, economic measures of promotion of the weak, and finally foundational principles of ethics.

The main focus is on regulations concerning cultic issues. Some of the stipulations in which the *ger* is mentioned open a door for him to participate in the Israelite cult, and regulate how this participation is to be enacted, in most cases by assigning him the same rights and duties as apply to the native Israelite. In these cases, participation in the cult of YHWH is an optional choice that the *ger* is offered. An example of this group of commands is Exodus 12:48-49: The *ger* can participate in the Passover if he wishes, but is not obliged to do so; if he decides to observe the holiday, he must follow the general rules, that is, be circumcised like all male Israelite participants.¹¹ A second group of stipulations oblige the *ger* to follow some fundamental cultic laws that a native Israelite has to observe, irrespective of how much he wants to integrate into the congregation of the Israelites at the religious level. The obligation to follow a minimum amount of Yahwistic cultic prescriptions does not, however, imply that the *ger* is compelled to accept or practice the YHWH-religion as a whole. The stipulations which the *ger* has to observe mainly deal with the avoidance of any kind of 'abomination' and with the extermination of every kind of guilt and impurity which, if not removed, would cause the land to 'vomit out' all its inhabitants.¹² The *ger* is also requested to follow legal stipulations in cases where a deviant course of action on his side would affect the Israelite community as a whole and endanger the Israelites' ability to keep God's commandments, which in turn would have negative consequences for the existence of Israel before God in the Promised Land. Among this second group of cultic stipulations, the ones that are binding on each *ger*, we find especially the prohibition to work on the Sabbath¹³ and on Yom Kippur.¹⁴

In practical terms, the distinction between the two groups of laws just mentioned means that generally the *ger* is included in the prohibitions, but not forced to observe the positive commandments.¹⁵

It is in the context of the passages that offer the *ger* the option to participate in the Israelite cult that we find formulations such as 'there shall be one law for you and the *ger*'.¹⁶ Formulations

such as these are often understood as an expression of a complete judicial equality of the *ger* with the full born Israelite in the (later layers of the) priestly laws.¹⁷ These 'inclusion formulas', as they are often called, are, however, not as sweepingly inclusive as it might appear: They refer to the *ger* only, not to any kind of foreigner, and they only state that in cases in which the *ger* wants to participate in the Israelite cult, in areas in which this is a question of personal choice and not an obligation, the same rules apply to him as to the native Israelite, not stricter or more lenient rules.

B. The Deuteronomic laws

In the Deuteronomic law collection (Deut 12-26), and the stipulations in other parts of the book of Deuteronomy, the regulations dealing with the *ger* can be classified in terms of topics more or less in the same way as outlined with regards to the priestly laws, with the important addition of the category 'establishment of the covenant and public reading of the torah'. A more thorough comparison with the priestly laws shows that the focus on the *ger* in the context of cultic regulations is much weaker in the Deuteronomic texts than in priestly texts; as far as the categories of morals and civil law are concerned, the *ger* is not mentioned at all. The main interest of the Deuteronomic laws concerning the *ger* lies in the areas of economic promotion and judicial protection. The *ger* as envisioned in these regulations is not simply a poor person; but he is perceived, in contradistinction to the *nokri*, as standing in a social and legal position that can lead to poverty if special measures of protection and promotion are not taken on his behalf.

As examples of regulations aimed at protecting the *ger* in the judicial sphere we can point to Deuteronomy 1:16; 24:14, 17-18; and 27:19: the *ger* must not be submitted to a disadvantageous treatment in judicial procedures because he is in a weaker position than native Israelites or because he belongs to the *personae miserae*, like the orphans and widows. This is related to the social fact that he has no independent legal standing in court. As far as the measures of economic protection and promotion of the *ger* are concerned, the following laws are representatives of this category: Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12-13 (dedication of the tithe to the *ger*, together with Levites, orphans and widows, every third year); 24:19-22 (right to glean the fields); and 24:14-15 (injunction to pay wages to a *ger* working as a hired labourer before sunset).¹⁸

Summarising the legal injunctions concerning the *ger* in both priestly and Deuteronomic law collections, the following can be said: As much as the *ger* is perceived as a person belonging to the socially weak, he is safeguarded by the law. This approach has parallels in prophetic statements that criticise the abuse of the *ger* and other weak persons.¹⁹ The *ger* is entitled to many of the same measures that are meant to protect and further the well-being of the potentially weak members of the Israelite society, especially orphans and widows (and sometimes Levites). However, this does not imply a full legal equality with native Israelites, insofar as he is not allowed to acquire land and act as an independent person in court. With respect to religion, the *ger* is prohibited to follow visibly deviant forms of worship and obliged to respect the basic rules of the Yahwistic religion; he is also invited – but not forced – to actively participate in the Israelite cult. In practical terms, this means that generally the *ger* is included in the prohibitions, but not forced to observe the positive commandments. This system can be said to be one in which, cast in modern terms, freedom of religion is – at least in theory – granted *partially*.²⁰ This is what one can expect in a society in which ethnic and religious identity are not clearly separated. The degree of freedom is of course lower than in modern liberal societies, but higher than, e.g., in states that strictly follow the principle *cuius regio eius religio*.

2.1.2 The foreigner of the *nokri*-type

Turning to the *nokri*, who – as far as the legal collections are concerned – is mentioned primarily in the Deuteronomic collection, the following picture emerges: The *nokri* is the one to whom, according to Deuteronomy 14:21, the corpses of animals that have not been ritually slaughtered may be sold for food, while the *ger* may be given such animals for free consumption, and the Israelite is forbidden to eat them at all.

According to Deuteronomy 15:3, the remission of debt that must be granted to the fellow Israelite in the Sabbatical year does not apply to the *nokri*. And according to Deuteronomy 23:20-21 it is permitted to charge interests on loans granted to a *nokri*, while this is not allowed with loans given to a fellow Israelite, called ‘brother’ (*‘ach*).²¹ The last two commandments have the same thrust: The *nokri* is not covered by regulations that aim at protecting the fellow Israelite. The rationale behind this regulation is clear: The *nokri* stands in a relatively distanced position both to the people of Israel

and to Yahwism; therefore, special measures aimed at protecting the members of the ethnic-religious community of Israel – and by extension the *ger* – economically do not apply to him. Rather, he is treated according to the internationally valid conditions informing the ancient Near Eastern credit system. If the specific measures intended to protect the Israelites economically were extended to the *nokri*, he would in fact be granted a one-sided economic advantage; for the *nokri* himself, by not being bound by the laws of Deuteronomy, did not have to observe the prohibition on interests vis-à-vis an Israelite loan taker, and he did not have to forgo debts in the Sabbatical year. Moreover, it is possible that the *nokri* continued to entertain close relations with his country of origin, which would mean that he was not dependent on the internal economic situation in Israel to the same degree as was his Israelite neighbour. In this case, the difference being made between an Israelite and a *nokri* can be explained by the necessity to grant special economic protection to those being confined to the interior Israelite economy and prevent their being exploited by high interest rates in times of crisis by persons wielding more financial resources. It is also possible that the difference between a *nokri* and an Israelite in terms of regulations of economic protection is based on the perception that loans granted to a fellow Israelite are typically measures to grant survival in situations of pressing need, while loans to a *nokri* are typically granted in the framework of ordinary business relations.²²

On a more general level, the exclusion of the *nokri* from the economic measures of promotion and protection for the Israelites and the *gerim* can be explained as follows: The regulations concerning these measures are rooted in the special relationship between YHWH and his people. The natural consequence of this relation is that special measures of promotion and protection as much as cultic obligations only apply to the elect people. The restriction of such measures to Israelites and *gerim* and the concomitant exclusion of the *nokri* from them can therefore not be described as expressing a ‘discriminatory’ attitude in the negative meaning of the term; we are not dealing with a case of random exclusion of foreigners but rather with a *correspondence between promotion and protection on the one hand and integration on the other hand, with the degree of integration into the Israelite community being left at the foreigner’s discretion*.

However, even if a foreigner decides to stay in

a distant position to Israel both socially and religiously, this does not mean that he can do whatever he wants and live in a wholly independent parallel society. The civil law was quite certainly binding on him in its entirety,²³ and even in the religious realm he was likely subject to a number of regulations that would have limited foreign religious practice to a considerable degree. When biblical texts show that special rights at the practical level were conceded to foreigners which encouraged them to continue non-Israelite religious practice, this is regularly condemned by biblical authors.²⁴ Nor, in fact, are there cases in which they are seen as promoting any kind of interreligious dialogue.

2.1.3 *Interim conclusions*

Summarising paragraph 2.1, we can observe three main points:

- There is no real general category of ‘foreigner’ that does not take into consideration differences of background on the one hand and assimilation on the other when it comes to the regulation of the status of foreigners. This stands in opposition to the post-modern theoretical principle of a general prohibition to ‘discriminate’, that is, to treat differently people with different ethnic or other backgrounds and different dispositions and attitudes towards the receiving society.²⁵
- In the case of ancient Israel, assimilation is seen as positive and necessary for those who have come to stay (*ger*).
- Depending on the realm of life and on the degree of assimilation, entitlements given to and obligations laid upon a foreigner vary. Foreigners of the *nokri*-type who do not commit themselves fully to a life in Israelite society are exempted from specific measures of support and promotion like debt relief in the Sabbatical year or prohibition of interests (Deut 15:3; 23:20-21). There is a clear correspondence between the degree to which a foreigner is willing to assimilate, and the degree to which the Israelites will absorb and integrate him. This is different from current models that attempt to use the giving of rights to non-adapted or barely adapted foreigners as a means to promote their integration.

2.2 Distinctions at the collective level / pertaining to specific ethnic groups

A text such as Deuteronomy 23:1-8²⁶ shows that distinctions could be made not only at a general level between individual *gerim* and individual

nokrim, but also with respect to specific ethnic groups.²⁷ In this passage, Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians are singled out for special treatment, based on historical encounters between them and Israel in the past, either negative or positive. The Edomites are also mentioned specifically, with the treatment prescribed for them based on ethnic proximity. Remarkably, no theological criteria are mentioned explicitly in these cases, which gives the passage a somewhat ‘nationalistic’ outlook as seen from a modern perspective. However, in the broader biblical context ‘theological’ motives are present as well: God has a special – if complex – relationship with all four peoples in question, and their behaviour towards Israel is related to their acceptance or (for the most part rather) rejection of the will of God. In any event, the Israelites seem to feel free to ‘discriminate’, that is, make distinctions, based on both ethnic considerations and historical experience.

Deuteronomy 23:1-8 is important also in other respects. The passage seems to regulate admission to the religious community of Israel, which would at the same time be admission to the class of ‘citizens’ enjoying full rights, presupposing that people may live on Israelite territory and yet not be full members of the congregation. If this interpretation is correct, it would point to the fact that there was a distinction between right of residence on the one hand and full citizenship on the other, a distinction which in some cases would be tantamount to the indefinite exclusion of some people from ‘citizenship’ based on their ethnic background. There is no political programme in view here dictating that the receiving society must guarantee full integration for everybody at least in the long term. On the other hand, the implicit message seems to be that under normal circumstances no one is in principle prohibited from taking residence in Israel.

Interestingly, Deuteronomy 23:1-8 is actually used as a piece of applicable law and implemented probably even at the civic level, not only at the level of the religious community, in the middle of the fifth century BC, as Nehemiah 13:1-3 suggests. According to this text, the law is applied in a way that goes beyond its literal stipulations; for restrictive measures are taken not only against the ethnic groups mentioned in Deuteronomy 23, but against all foreigners. At the same time, it is probable that people who had joined the faith of the Israelites were not affected by the measures.²⁸ If this interpretation is correct, the ethnic and

historical criteria prevalent in Deuteronomy 23 were replaced by religious criteria in the time of Nehemiah. At any event, the case makes clear that there was a dynamic development in the understanding and possible use of rules regulating the dealing with immigrants. Old traditions were taken up, but applied in a way that clearly took changes in the historical circumstances into consideration. This approach of *combining reverence for traditional prescriptions with sensitivity to historical changes* might open a window onto possible ways of how to consider biblical and other relevant paradigms in the current migration debate.

Besides the ethnic groups mentioned in Deuteronomy 23, other groups are also singled out for special treatment. Prime examples are the Canaanite peoples and the Amalekites, also mentioned in Deuteronomy. The Israelites are requested to treat the Canaanite peoples according to the rules of the 'ban' (*cherem*),²⁹ which probably implies the annihilation of these peoples, if they do not submit themselves to Israel and her God.³⁰ The main reason for the command to execute the ban is double-edged: God's punishment shall be enacted on a group of peoples who have sinned against him in a particularly odious way on the one hand; the Israelites are prevented from being snared by the Canaanites' deviant but potentially attractive religious practices on the other. As far as the Amalekites are concerned, the Israelites are requested to destroy their remembrance because of the treacherous and insidious way in which they opposed the Israelites after they had left Egypt.³¹

As opposed to the cases of the *ger* and the *nokri*, it is clear that the special treatment envisioned for specific ethnic groups cannot be generalised even within the context of the biblical framework. This is even more true for the case of the Canaanites: To execute the ban on them is a command that had restricted validity in terms of ethnicity as well as in terms of time, since it only applied to the period of the conquest of the Promised Land.³²

3. The tension between positive and critical statements

There is a risk to reduce the complexity and diversity of the biblical material concerning migration by selecting only those texts that fit one's assumptions or agenda. For example, texts like Exodus 22:20 ('you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him') or Numbers 15:16 ('there is to be one law and one ordinance for you and for the alien who

sojourns with you') are often dealt with as the only important texts deciding the matter, while texts that do not square well with such a view are sometimes left aside or overlooked, or subjected to the modern interpreter's *a-priori* criticism, as for example Deuteronomy 23:1-8 or Nehemiah 13:1-3, where the respective texts are denounced without being given a closer or fair hearing.³³

What are basic concepts in the Hebrew Bible that deal in some way or another with various aspects of 'otherness' and 'migration'? Here is a selection of important perspectives that are pertinent to the issue:³⁴

a) Genesis 1-11 shows that every human being, as an individual, independent of racial or ethnic background, bears infinite value because of their *imago Dei* character.³⁵ This means that there is no room for racial pride at the cost of others. However, this principle applies primarily to individuals; it does not exclude the possibility that historical ethnic groups can be assessed and treated in different ways, and often (in postlapsarian conditions) quite negatively.³⁶ In accordance with the *imago Dei* concept, however, negative assessments are not related to flaws in the creation or to flaws in human nature itself.

The creational equality of humans regardless of their racial or ethnic background not only excludes racial favouritism or negative discrimination;³⁷ it also means that there cannot be an absolute strangeness between humans that would touch the very core of human nature. On the other hand, the fact that all humans are related to one first couple, Adam and Eve, in the perspective of Genesis 3 also implies that *coram Deo* every human being, irrespective of ethnic identity, is a sinner, not simply 'good'. This applies also to migrants.

b) In many layers of the Hebrew Bible there is a relatively clear demarcation against the 'other' in the definition of the (own) Israelite identity.³⁸ However, as opposed to the major ancient Near Eastern cultures and many others in the history of humankind, this demarcation is not bound up with a general denigration of others as sub-humans, barbarians or the like.³⁹ This is a rather remarkable combination.

Another striking trait of biblical Israelites' attitude towards foreigners is that while Israelite culture is marked by a high degree of self-criticism, this is not combined with an idealisation of the foreign 'other' as such. This seems to be untypical, since one often finds either a combination of

lack of self-criticism with pejorative views of the foreign 'other', or a combination of self-criticism with an idealisation of the foreign 'other'.⁴⁰

c) Again to Genesis 1–11, plurality and diversity in terms of ethnicity are understood as something positive, not as a deficiency that has to be overcome by human endeavours to create faceless uniformity.⁴¹ This can be seen from the connection between the blessings of humankind in Genesis 1:28 and that of Noah and his sons in 9:1 on the one hand and the list of nations in Genesis 10 on the other. Plurality and diversity in terms of ethnicity are depicted as demonstrating God's creative power. The alternative vision, the human desire to reduce this diversity by establishing a centralised form of society, is explicitly and polemically rejected in the story of the city and tower of Babylon (Gen 11).⁴²

Genesis 10:5, 20 and 31 show what – according to the view represented there – are constitutional elements of a people: a particular territory (*erets*), a specific language (*lashon*) and a unity and identity based on some kind of familial relationship (*mish-pachah*). At the same time, the examples of Rahab and her family, the Gibeonites, and Ruth, among others, show that ethnic boundaries are not envisioned as rigid and insurmountable.⁴³

d) There is a general thematic overlap between the list of nations in Genesis 10 and Deuteronomy 32:8, as well as a specific connection between the two texts via the shared use of the verb *prd* (to separate) and the number 70 as the delimitation of the world of nations that are governed by God. Deuteronomy 32:8 states:

When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel.⁴⁴

The number in view is 70, since 70 peoples are listed in Genesis 10, and 70 was the number of the members of Jacob's house when they migrated to Egypt. The number 70 has to be understood as symbolic, representing completeness and abundance. This text again shows that differentiation between different peoples is not a deficit that humans must try to overcome, but in fact the opposite: the differentiation and division of humanity into a variety of peoples with specific boundaries (*gebul*) is in accordance with God's will and is related to his own actions.⁴⁵ Differentiation and variety, not a system of rigid uniformity, is God's purpose not only in the realms of plants and

animals, but also in the realm of peoples, including the political dimensions of this realm.⁴⁶ In every realm he does not create just one 'ideal' type, not just one flower or one mammal and so on, but an infinite variety; and God's aim with his creation, as expressed in the blessings in Genesis 1, is that this variety comes to full flourishing. As just mentioned, this is true in terms of ethnic diversity as well.

Theologically, this positive concept of diversity can be related to a diversity within the divine realm, with Israel's God YHWH being repeatedly depicted as presiding over a kind of heavenly council.⁴⁷ The New Testament is even more explicit in the proposition of a dynamic relationship within God. At any event, the act of creation in itself means that God confines himself and opens space for an 'other' who is different from himself; he creates plurality and difference.

e) The election of Israel, including the assignment of a land of her own and the ascription not only of a specific religious profile, but also of a certain – though not rigid – ethnic identity,⁴⁸ plays an important role in the Hebrew Bible as a whole, also beyond the use of the verb *prd*⁴⁹ and the noun *gebul* which were mentioned above. One implication of this is worth mentioning here: Since Israel is meant to be a kind of model for the world of nations, it may be assumed that a similar structuring of that world of nations, in line with the Israelite model, would be in accordance with the divine will in the perception of many layers of the Hebrew Bible. Texts like Genesis 10 and Deuteronomy 32:8 clearly support such a view. It is further corroborated by the observation that there is no call to construct a transnational-multicultural type of state in the pre-eschatological horizon.

f) While Deuteronomy 32:8 shows that it is God who has set the boundaries between the nations, Amos 1:13 makes the point that an extension – that is, a random and unjustified extension – of borders connected with the use of excessive force infringes on the divinely intended 'international law' and will be prosecuted by him.

g) On the other hand, according to Amos 9:7 God is involved in the migration of the Philistines and Arameans no less than that of the Israelites. This implies that the divine establishment of the connection between the peoples and specific territories must not be understood in a strictly static sense and not be given quasi-metaphysical status. The verse shows that there is not only a divine

allotment of territories and an *unjustified* expansion of borders, but that there are also divinely induced (and by implication therefore *justified*) wanderings of peoples resulting in their settlement at new places, which is, as a rule, connected to some kind of loss for the people previously inhabiting the respective territory.

This means that both a (relatively stable) division of humankind into different ethnic groups living in different countries, *and* dynamic migration processes are part of God's plans with humankind. The first can be seen in Genesis 10 and Deuteronomy 32:8; and passages in Deuteronomy that prohibit the Israelites to attack neighbouring peoples with the argument that their territories have been given to them by God himself speak to the same effect.⁵⁰ The second aspect comes to the fore in the vast number of texts that point to God's involvement in the exodus of Israel from Egypt, but also in the passages that mention migrations of other peoples, like the Philistines and Arameans in Amos 9:7, as we have just seen, the Edomites in Deuteronomy 2:12, 22, or the Ammonites in Deuteronomy 2:21.

h) As seen in part 2 above, some laws prescribe a positive attitude toward the *ger*. As Deuteronomy 24:14-15 shows, not heeding these prescriptions is deemed a sin, and the abused *ger* can appeal directly to YHWH.

i) As far as the future perspective on the relationship between Israelites and their God on the one hand and foreigners on the other is concerned, we note that biblical texts do not present a homogeneous picture, but a rich variety of colours. An important element of these pictures is that there will still be a variety of ethnic groups in the eschatological future, but gravitating around the spiritual centre in Jerusalem.⁵¹

Both an attack of foreign armies and a peaceful pilgrimage of foreign peoples to Mount Zion are expected;⁵² foreign peoples are subject to God's judgment, but foreign peoples are also expected to participate in God's salvation of his people Israel.⁵³ Some texts speak of a rule of Israel over other peoples, while others envision the inclusion of foreigners into God's people on more equal terms.⁵⁴ The details of such future expectations are elaborated in various ways. Different expectations are mentioned side by side, sometimes within one chapter of the same book.

It is possible to tentatively harmonise these various expectations to some degree in the following

way: God's judgment over his people, related to an attack of foreign powers against Jerusalem, precedes the salvation and ultimate re-establishment of Israel, which again will lead to a subordination of foreign peoples, combined with their inclusion into God's eschatological salvation.⁵⁵ This means that those foreigners who were not destroyed by God's judgment will enjoy God's blessings which are mediated by Israel. Foreign peoples, as far as they survive the eschatological judgment, will not be dissolved in a face- and boundless unity, but retain distinct identities.⁵⁶ They will, however, be united in their orientation towards Zion and her God, in the state of 'servants'. The term 'servant' describes the fate of foreigners in a two-fold way: foreigners can choose to become 'servants' in the positive meaning of the word by joining the congregation of the YHWH-worshippers;⁵⁷ or they can be subject to the less positive experience of being compelled to serve the Israelites in a subordinate position, in a complete reversal of previous conditions.⁵⁸

j) Both with respect to the (eschatological) future and in descriptions of ideal types of government beyond Israel there are no calls to establish a global political unity by means of conventional human politics. On the other hand, some texts, primarily royal / enthronement psalms, stress the world-wide character of the dominion of YHWH or his Messiah. This dominion likely implies some kind of political unity, though no details about it are given. Importantly, however, there is nevertheless talk of a plurality of distinguishable nations in such texts,⁵⁹ and no programme pointing to the human-political realisation of the global dominion of God or his Messiah is developed. We are, then, talking about a picture of unity in these texts that allows for variety and is not identical to uniformity.

k) Experiences of migration deeply characterise the history both of the patriarchs and of the people of Israel. However, the wanderings of the patriarchs and the Israelites are not glorified as some kind of ideal, but put in the frame of a divine historical plan in which not the wandering, but the rest in the Promised Land – be it after its first entry or beyond the exile – is described as the real goal.

It is worth pointing out in this context that the first human couple in their pre-lapsarian condition did not live as migrants, but were settled in the garden in Eden. The expulsion from this state was only a consequence of sin. And Cain was only later condemned to a perpetual existence as a

migrant, as a direct consequence of the murder of his brother.

l) There are four verses that describe human existence in terms of being a 'sojourner' (*ger*) with YHWH: Leviticus 25:23, Psalms 39:13; 119:19, and 1 Chronicles 29:15. What does this mean? The last three texts express the limitation of human control over one's own life. In addition, reference is made to the idea that the Israelites do not dispose fully of the land that God has given them, that they are really tenants, not owners. This aspect is the one that dominates in Leviticus 25:23: YHWH is the real owner of the land and the Israelites are merely sojourners with him. One of the consequences of this view is that landownership is not a matter of the free market, but must remain within the extended family and cannot be transferred to foreigners. There is, however, nothing to suggest that these texts advocate literal migration as the 'real' or 'better' way of life (for an average person).⁶⁰

4. Perspectives on migration in the New Testament

a) In general terms, it can be said that the New Testament texts do not 'overcome' the complex picture of the Hebrew Bible. Rather, questions concerning migration are being taken up from a different perspective. The main difference consists in the fact that the new community of believers created by the gospel of and about Jesus from Nazareth does not address questions of migration based on an identity that is marked by ethnic coherence and state-like civic structuring, as is the case in biblical Israel.

b) According to Galatians 3:28, in the emerging Christian communities there is no difference between 'Jews and Greeks' as far as their status before God is concerned. Love for the fellow believer is also not limited by ethnic considerations.

c) On the other hand, it is important to note that in all larger corpora of New Testament writings, love for fellow believers has precedence over love for people outside the congregation.⁶¹ And the view that creational differences such as those of ethnicity are irrelevant with respect to a person's standing before God does not imply that such differences can be ignored when it comes to ordering practical life, including the organisation of civic life in a state. According to all New Testament authors

touching on the subject, the state is no 'charity' that works for the relief of suffering people all over the planet, but has the divinely ordained – and much more limited – role of guarantor of order within its borders and of defender against enemies attacking its borders.⁶² In this context, it is important to observe that the Sermon on the Mount – often identified as the very core of New Testament ethics – must not be interpreted in terms of a direct blueprint for policies of state agencies, but rather marks the goals and aspirations that guide the followers of Jesus in their private lives.⁶³

d) Of course, there is no limit to what the core principle of love for the neighbour may entail at the level of an individual person's private life, including with respect to love for migrants. Migration policy on the state level, however, has to take into consideration the broader aspects mentioned above if it wants to be in accordance with biblical views. This also means that the personal decision to help migrants must not undermine this broader framework.

e) It is also important to recognise that the New Testament contains a good number of texts that advocate a clear demarcation from foreign influences of some kind or another, with the distinction between believers and non-believers taking a central position.⁶⁴ Related to this, it has also to be taken into account that Acts 17:26 confirms that a differentiation of various ethnic groups together with concomitant national structures is seen as a positive institution ordained by God himself. The book of Revelation expects that even at the time of the completion of world history there will be a distinction of various, clearly definable ethnic groups among the people participating in God's salvation.⁶⁵

f) Matthew 25:35, 38, 43-44 is the famous passage on the last judgment in which the Lord Jesus makes a distinction between sheep and goats, based – among other things – on the question whether they have shown hospitality to persons who are referred to as *xenos*. This passage is very often quoted in support of a welcoming attitude to migrants in the current debate about migration. It is seen as the primary witness of the New Testament for an unconditional pro-migrant position, building on texts from the Hebrew Bible that speak about the protection of the *ger* in the judicial and his support in the economic realm.⁶⁶ The situation is, however, more complex. Firstly, *xenos* is not the direct Greek equivalent to *ger*.⁶⁷

Secondly, the Matthean passage speaks about hospitality, and hospitality on a private level, which is not the same as judicial protection and long-term economic support in a legal context. Finally, the recipients of this hospitality, the *xenoi*, are from among 'the little ones of mine', meaning, they are in all likelihood fellow Christians, which makes the help that is extended a case of support specifically for Christians, not a programme for the benefit of migrants in general.⁶⁸

This is very similar in 3 John 5, where the author encourages his addressees to do good for and extend love to the brothers in Christ, especially the *xenoi* among them. In this instance it is made even more explicit that the beneficiaries of the help extended by the Christians are not *xenoi* in general, but fellow Christians. Whether in this case as well as in Matthew 25 *xenos* refers to people of a different ethnic background or just people outside the own extended family or from some not too distant village is not entirely clear. There seems no reason, however, to exclude the former possibility. This, then, would mean that in practical life, in correspondence with the spiritual character of the new people of God, distinctions between different ethnic groups are toned down, as we have already seen above. It does not mean, however, that ethnic distinctions are completely erased.

g) Specific legal regulations concerning the treatment of *ger* and *nokri* are absent in the New Testament, mainly because of the fact that not only no state in the world of the nations, but not even the Church of the new covenant is a direct equivalent to ancient Israel. As far as the regulations concerning the *nokri* are concerned, it is interesting to note that as opposed to the Hebrew Bible, the focus of the correspondent Greek terms in the New Testament (most importantly *allogenes*, *xenos*, *paroikos* and *proselytos*) is not on distance, but on the possibility of integration into the new assembly of God, sometimes with undertones of a beginning fulfilment of eschatological expectations of the Old Testament.⁶⁹ As far as the *ger* of the Hebrew Bible is concerned, there is no continuation of the specific legal measures provided in the law collections of the Hebrew Bible for his social protection and economic support, nor is there a continuation of the (partial) inclusion of this type of person into the religious rules found in the Hebrew Bible. Rather, there is only a thin connection between the two Testaments in this respect, in terms of a very general admonition

to extend personal help to brothers and sisters in need.

h) The clearest line of continuity as far as the *ger* is concerned is between passages in the Hebrew Bible that use *ger* to express the transient character of human existence on this earth or of the Israelites' tenure of the Promised Land, and the New Testament description of the believers' lives in terms of a pilgrimage.⁷⁰ Such texts become more important in the New Testament, with the notion of 'pilgrimage' being one of the main metaphors that describe the central aspects of Christian life in this world.

i) The New Testament goes beyond the legal texts concerning the *ger* in the Hebrew Bible by explicitly including the 'sojourners' in the new people of God, as in Ephesians 2:19, fulfilling expectations found in a small number of prophetic texts in the Hebrew Bible.⁷¹

j) As far as texts in the Hebrew Bible dealing with the Canaanites are concerned (with their commands concerning either ban or expulsion), there is a linguistic connection from these texts to passages in the New Testament that deal with church discipline and the question of mixed marriages;⁷² another line leads to passages in the New Testament that speak about God's judgment against his own people and the world at large.⁷³ As opposed to the Hebrew Bible, the use of violence executed by humans is nowhere implied in the New Testament.

k) As in the case of the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament authors do not provide support for a general openness to foreigners as such, regardless of their religious affiliation, or for a political programme promoting large-scale migration / open borders, or prioritising help to migrants as opposed to help to other persons in need. What we find in the New Testament is something else, something which differs from both a narrow nationalism and a general cosmopolitan humanitarianism: a prioritising of help for the brothers and sisters in Christ, regardless of their ethnic background.

5. Conclusion

An investigation of the Bible's contribution to the current migration debate has to take into consideration both the various presuppositions that may inform the participants' views and especially the complexity of the biblical material dealing with the topic. Within this material, the elements that

are related to creation and primordial history may – because of their highlighted redactional setting at the beginning of the canon – be assigned special weight. Similar attention is warranted for the descriptions of ideal and/or eschatological states. This implies that a reductionist view which only focuses on the legal texts in the Hebrew Bible and on prophetic passages directly related to such texts does not provide a perspective that is broad enough. One of the main results of the study of the relevant biblical material is the tension between the irreducible dignity of every human being and the relativity of particular national identities on the one hand and the importance of ethnicity and nation as foundational elements of the order of human society at least under pre-eschatological conditions on the other.

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Endnotes

- 1 This article builds on a paper presented at a symposium on the Bible and migration held at Trinity College in Dublin on 6–7 April 2016. [Editor: It also forms an excellent preparation for the August 2018 conference of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians on the theme of Christian Identity and Mission in a Divided Europe.]
- 2 Cf. A. Favell, 'Rebooting Migration Theory' in C.B. Brettell and J.F. Hollifield (eds), *Migration Theory: Thinking across Disciplines* (2nd edn; New York: Routledge, 2008) 265, 268.
- 3 See, e.g., J.M. Maruskin, 'The Bible: The Ultimate Migration Handbook', *Church & Society* 95 (2005) 77–90 (79).
- 4 See, e.g., M.D. Carroll R., 'Welcoming the Stranger: Toward a Theology of Immigration in Deuteronomy' in J.S. DeRouchie, J. Gile and K.J. Turner (eds), *For Our Good Always: Studies on the Message and Influence of Deuteronomy in Honor of Daniel I. Block* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013) 441–461 (444, 447). More precisely, Carroll's article mentions, with a view to Deuteronomy, both welcoming and less welcoming passages; but it is only the first that are given weight in the part entitled 'Lessons for Immigration from Deuteronomy' (447–461). For further examples see Maruskin, 'The Bible', *passim*.
- 5 The basic thrust in M.D. Carroll R., 'Immigration and the Bible', *Missio Dei* 19 (2010) 1–21; Maruskin, 'The Bible'.
- 6 See, e.g., Carroll, 'Immigration', 3, 10, cf. also 15–16; 'Welcoming', 457–458; Maruskin, 'The Bible', *passim*.
- 7 See, e.g., Carroll, 'Welcoming', 456, 460; Maruskin, 'The Bible', 87, 89.
- 8 The *nokri* can also be designated as *ben-nekar* or *ben-hannekar*. Another term used to designate 'foreigners' is *zar*, but for the present purposes it is not necessary to take this into consideration because its uses do not affect the more fundamental picture that is drawn by the attestations of *ger* and *nokri*.
- 9 Throughout the article, for 'he' also read 'she' where appropriate.
- 10 For details concerning the general characteristics of persons designated as *ger* or *nokri* respectively see, e.g., R. Martin-Achard, 'גֵּר *gūr* als Fremdling weilen', *THAT I* (ed. E. Jenni and C. Westermann; München: Kaiser, 1984) col. 409–412, and R. Martin-Achard, 'נֶכֶדָר *nēkār* Fremde', *THAT II* (ed. E. Jenni and C. Westermann; München: Kaiser, 1984) col. 66–68.
There is an ongoing discussion as to whether the term *ger* in most of its attestations in Deuteronomy as well as in the Covenant Collection really refers to an ethnically non-Israelite person. The question is answered positively by, e.g., S. Krauss, 'The Word "GER" in the Bible and its Implications', *Jewish Biblical Quarterly* 34 (2006) 264–270, and negatively by, e.g., C. Bultmann, *Der Fremde im antiken Juda: Eine Untersuchung zum sozialen Typenbegriff 'ger' in seinem Bedeutungswandel in der alttestamentlichen Gesetzgebung* (FRLANT 153; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992).
- 11 The regulation concerning burnt- and peace-offerings in Lev 17:8–9 offers a similar example: The *ger* is not forced to, but allowed to offer these sacrifices; if he decides to do so, he has to take them to the entrance of the holy tent, as all Israelites are obliged to do.
- 12 See Lev 18:25, 28; 20:22.
- 13 See Exod 20:10; Deut 5:14. These commandments are part of the Decalogue and as such do, of course, not relate directly to the priestly laws.
- 14 See Leviticus 16. Further examples are to keep or eat leaven during the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (Exod 12:19), the prohibition against blood consumption (Lev 17:12–13), the prohibition against child sacrifice to Molekh (Lev 18:26; 20:2), the execution of the death penalty for blasphemers (Lev 24:16), the necessity of cultic expiation in case of an inadvertent transgression (Num 15:22–31) and of ritual cleansing after contact with a dead human body (Num 19:10–22).
- 15 For details see M. Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden in Israel und Assyrien: Ein Beitrag zur Anthropologie des 'Fremden' im Licht antiker Quellen* (BWANT 168; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2005) 327–340,

- 348–350.
- 16 See Exod 12:49; Lev 24:22; Num 9:14; 15:14–16, 29.
- 17 For more details see Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden*, 340. As the list in the previous footnote shows, such formulas are found exclusively in priestly laws (if Exod 12:49 is also counted among them). Commentators who defend an inclusivist egalitarian interpretation of these formulas (in the sense of a general judicial equality of the *ger* with the native Israelites) either opt for a late, that is, postexilic dating of priestly laws in general, or of the specific laws in which these formulas are found in particular.
- 18 One could also point to the command to love the *ger*, as YHWH himself loves the *ger*, found in Deut 10:18–19. For a more detailed analysis of this passage see M. Zehnder, ‘Literary and Other Observations on Passages Dealing with Foreigners in the Book of Deuteronomy: The Command to Love the *Ger* Read in Context’ in D.I. Block and R.L. Schultz (eds), *Sepher Torah Mosheh. Studies in the Composition and Interpretation of Deuteronomy* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2017) 192–231.
- 19 See, e.g., Jer 7:6; 22:3; Ezek 22:7; Zech 7:10; Mal 3:5.
- 20 The specifics of this model are difficult to assess. At the archaeological level, it is clear that there is evidence for the existence of non-Yahwistic forms of religion in the land of Israel in pre-exilic times. (See, e.g., the inscription in Tomb 2 of Khirbet el-Qom which dates to the second half of the 8th century and mentions Asherah besides YHWH.) On the other hand, it is not clear whether such evidence can be related to the *ger*. Even more importantly, there is an ongoing debate as to whether the Yahwistic cult was dominant or ‘official’ in this period at all. As far as the textual biblical evidence is concerned, there are many texts that do point to the existence of non-Yahwistic forms of religion in pre-exilic Israel, though always in a condemning manner.
- 21 The *nokri* is also mentioned in Deut 17:15 where it is stated that no *nokri* must be allowed to become king over Israel.
- 22 See Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden*, 370–371.
- 23 Regardless of the question as to what degree the actual civil laws were in agreement with those regulations in the biblical law collections that can be labelled ‘civic’.
- 24 See, e.g., 1 Kgs 11; 16:29–33.
- 25 This principle, however, is often more theoretical than practical, because in all cases of a state’s attempt to guarantee equality in factual results and not only equal opportunities, by implementing various kinds of affirmative action, an element of different treatment, that is, ‘discrimination’, based on different ethnic or other backgrounds, is necessarily involved.
- 26 English Deut 23:2–9. Whether the first two verses also have to do with persons of non-Israelite ethnic background is a matter of debate.
- 27 For a more comprehensive discussion of this passage see J.H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia / Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) 210–213; M. Zehnder, ‘Anstösse aus Dtn 23,2–9 zur Frage nach dem Umgang mit Fremden’, *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie* 52 (2005) 300–314.
- 28 This may be implied by Neh 10:29 (see also Ezra 6:21). However, the exact interpretation of this verse is a matter of debate. Matthew Thiessen has presented weighty arguments that challenge an inclusivist reading of Ezra 6:21 and Neh 10:29; see Matthew Thiessen, ‘The Function of a Conjunction: Inclusivist or Exclusivist Strategies in Ezra 6.19–21 and Nehemiah 10.29–30?’ *JSOT* 34 (2001) 63–79.
- 29 See Deut 7:1–5; cf. also Exod 23:23–33; 34:11–16; Num 33:50–56.
- 30 For details see, e.g., C.S. Cowles, D. Merrill, D. Gard and Tremper Longman III, *Show Them No Mercy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003); R.S. Hess, ‘War in the Hebrew Bible: An Overview’ in R.S. Hess and E.A. Martens (eds), *War in the Bible and Terrorism in the Twenty-First Century* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008) 19–32; Y. Hoffman, ‘The Deuteronomistic Concept of the Herem’, *ZAW* 111 (1999) 196–210; M. Zehnder, ‘The Annihilation of the Canaanites: Reassessing the Brutality of the Biblical Witnesses’ in M. Zehnder and H. Hagelia (eds), *Encountering Violence in the Bible* (Sheffield: Phoenix Press, 2013) 263–290.
- 31 See Deut 25:17–19.
- 32 See Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden*, 401. This does not mean that the concept of *cherem* does not appear in biblical texts that refer to later periods (see especially 1 Sam 15:21; 1 Kgs 20:42); but these references are not related to the Canaanites.
- 33 Such an approach can be found, e.g., in H. Bedford-Strohm, ‘Den Fremding sollt ihr nicht bedrücken’, chapter ‘Der theologisch-ethische Orientierungsrahmen’ (www.bayern-evangelisch.de/downloads/ELKB-Landesbischof-Migration-und-Flucht-aus-der-Sicht-christlicher-Ethik-2014.pdf [accessed 23 Sept. 2016]); Carroll, ‘Welcoming’, *passim*.
- 34 For reasons of space, it is not possible to explain the various aspects mentioned here in any detail or to discuss the relationship between them. The main point is more modest: to demonstrate the wide spectrum and variety of aspects that are represented in the diverse biblical voices.
- 35 See Gen 1:26–27; 9:6. Cf. the comments in Carroll, ‘Immigration’, 5–6.
- 36 (Random) examples would be the Canaanites and Amalekites mentioned above.

- 37 Which, in turn, does obviously not preclude God's different and unique treatment of Israel as his elected nation later in history.
- 38 This point is completely ignored by, e.g., Maruskin, 'The Bible', 89 ('There is no room in Christ's teachings for a "them and us"').
- 39 For the situation in Assyria see Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden*, 63–74.
- 40 In the continental European political context, the National-Socialists would be an extreme example for the first position, broad currents within the current left-green camp examples for the latter.
- 41 Pace Maruskin, 'The Bible', 79.
- 42 There are those who do not perceive this point. By way of example, we may point to Carroll who states: 'Humanity gathers in rebellion against God at Babel, but then is scattered, a dispersal that yields the multiplication of nations (Genesis 10–11)'; Carroll, 'Immigration', 6. In such comments the division of humankind into different nations is seen as negative, because the sequence of Genesis 10 and 11 is turned on its head and Deut 32:8 is not taken into consideration.
- 43 For Rahab and her family see Josh 6:25; for the Gibeonites see Josh 9:26–27; 10:1.
- 44 NAS. Or, according to another textual variant, 'in accordance with the number of the *beney 'el*, the sons of God (i.e., the heavenly beings)'.
45 A similar view is attested in Acts 17:26. M.G. Brett, 'Forced Migrations, Asylum Seekers and Human Rights', *Colloquium* 45 (2013) 121–136 (124), also points to these texts and states that they show that 'there is a properly ethical status for borders'. He further explains that 'there is an inevitable conceptual linkage between affirming borders and affirming the idea of homeland' ('Forced Migrations', 125). On the other hand, there are those who ignore this point; see, e.g., Maruskin, 'The Bible', 79, referring positively to the Brethren's slogan 'God made people – people made borders'; cf. also 89: 'As we read the New Testament, we see people moving freely, without borders.'
- 46 E. Rosenstock-Huessy, *Des Christen Zukunft oder wir überholen die Moderne* (Moers: Brendow Verlag, 1985) 59, writes: 'Die Pluralität der vielen Staaten im Gegensatz zur Universalität der Einen Kirche war der spezifisch christliche Beitrag zum politischen Leben. Wenn es nur Einen Staat gäbe, könnten wir nicht frei atmen.' ('The plurality of the many states as opposed to the universality of the One Church was the specific Christian contribution to political life. If there had been just One State, we could not breathe freely.')
- 47 See, e.g., Psalm 82.
- 48 It is important to note that the story of the exodus from Egypt, which describes the moment of Israel's coming into being as a people, mentions the participation of an unquantifiable number of foreigners, see Exod 12:38.
- 49 To this we would need to add the verb *bdl*. Its role in the discussion of the topic of differentiation cannot be investigated here.
- 50 See, e.g., Deut 2:5, 9, 19.
- 51 For details see Zehnder, *Umgang mit Fremden*, 502–540.
- 52 For texts describing the attack of foreign armies see, e.g., Isa 29 or Zech 14:2; for texts describing the peaceful pilgrimage of foreign peoples to Jerusalem see, e.g., Isa 2:1–4; Zech 8:20–22.
- 53 For examples of foreign peoples being subject to God's judgment see, e.g., Isa 29:5–8; Zech 14:3, 12–13; for examples of foreign peoples participating in the salvation of Israel see, e.g., Isa 19:16–25; Zech 2:15–16; 9:7.
- 54 For texts describing the rule of Israel over other peoples see, e.g., Isa 14:2; Amos 9:12; Mic 4:13; Isa 54:3; Obad 18–20; Zeph 2:8–11; for texts describing the inclusion of foreigners into God's people on more equal terms see again Isa 19:16–25 and Zech 2:15–16.
- 55 A chapter that exhibits all traits at once is Zechariah 14.
- 56 Therefore, a number of texts still use specific ethnic labels, like Philistines, Edomites, Moabites and Ammonites in Isa 11:14; Egyptians, Ethiopians and Sabeans in Isa 45:14; Ammonites in Jer 49:1–6; Greeks and Sabeans in Joel 4:8; Edomites in Amos 9:12; Moabites and Ammonites in Zeph 2:8–11; Cushites in Zeph 3:9–10; and Philistines in Zech 9:7. Many other examples could be listed.
- 57 See, e.g., Isa 56:6.
- 58 See, e.g., Isa 14:2.
- 59 See, e.g., Ps 72:10–11.
- 60 Since migration is always in some way or another and to some degree or another a disruptive process, it would be surprising if these texts really suggested migration as the way to follow for a majority of people.
- 61 See, e.g., Gal 6:10.
- 62 See especially Rom 13:3–4.
- 63 This has been stressed most clearly by Martin Luther and reflects the majority position in the newer exegetical community; see, e.g., D. Crump, 'Applying the Sermon on the Mount', *Criswell Theological Review* 6 (1992) 3–14.
- 64 See, e.g., Rom 15:31; 1 Cor 6:5; 2 Cor 6:14–15; 3 John 7.
- 65 See, e.g., Rev 21:24–26; 22:2.
- 66 Cf., e.g., the 'Matthew 25 Movement' (see www.matthew25pledge.com).
- 67 In the Septuagint, *ger* is rendered mostly either by *proselytos* or by *paroikos*. The latter would be the natural candidate for Matthew 25 if the continuity with the texts mentioning the *ger* was to be stressed, given the fact that *proselytos* had become semantically too narrow to fulfil this role.

- 68 See, e.g., D. Cortés-Fuentes, 'The Least of These My Brothers: Matthew 25:31-46', *Apuntes* 23.2 (2003) 100–109.
- 69 See, e.g., Eph 2:19. This is true not only with a view to the attestations of the term *nokri* in legal texts, but with a view the attestations of this term in general, as well as for the attestations of the term *zar*.
- 70 See especially 1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11:9, 13.
- 71 See especially Isa 14:1 and Ezek 47:22-23.
- 72 Examples of the former are 1 Cor 5; 3 John 10; an example of the latter is found in 1 Cor 7:10, 15.
- 73 See, e.g., Acts 3:22; 1 Cor 16:22; Gal 1:8-9; 1 Thess 5:3; 2 Thess 1:9; Heb 12:29.

Conference of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians

The next conference of the Fellowship of European Evangelical Theologians will take place – God willing – in Prague on 24-28 August 2018. Its theme is 'Christian Identity and Mission in a Divided Europe'. The main papers will be:

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2. "Religious Freedom and Pluralistic Europe" by Prof. Christof Sauer (Leuven, Belgium)
3. "Living with Scriptures, Living in a Democracy" by Prof. Ad de Bruijne (Kampen, Netherlands)
4. "Christian Mission in Pluralistic Europe" by Prof. Tomáš Halík (Prague, Czech Republic)
5. "The Challenge of Islam within the Cultural Diversity of Europe" by Prof. Bernard Reitsma (Amsterdam, Netherlands)
6. "A Biblical-Theological Perspective of the Nation in a Pluralistic Europe" by Dr Mykhailo Chorenkov (Kiev, Ukraine)
7. "The Public role of the Church" by Daniel Pastircak (Bratislava, Slovakia)
8. "European Christianity in Retrospect and Prospect" by Prof. Henri Blocher (Vaux-sur-Seine, France)

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